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# COMIC TALK™

30TH ANNIVERSARY!

X-MEN / AVENGERS

INTERVIEW WITH

DAVID ROSS &

TOM PALMER

ISSUE #13

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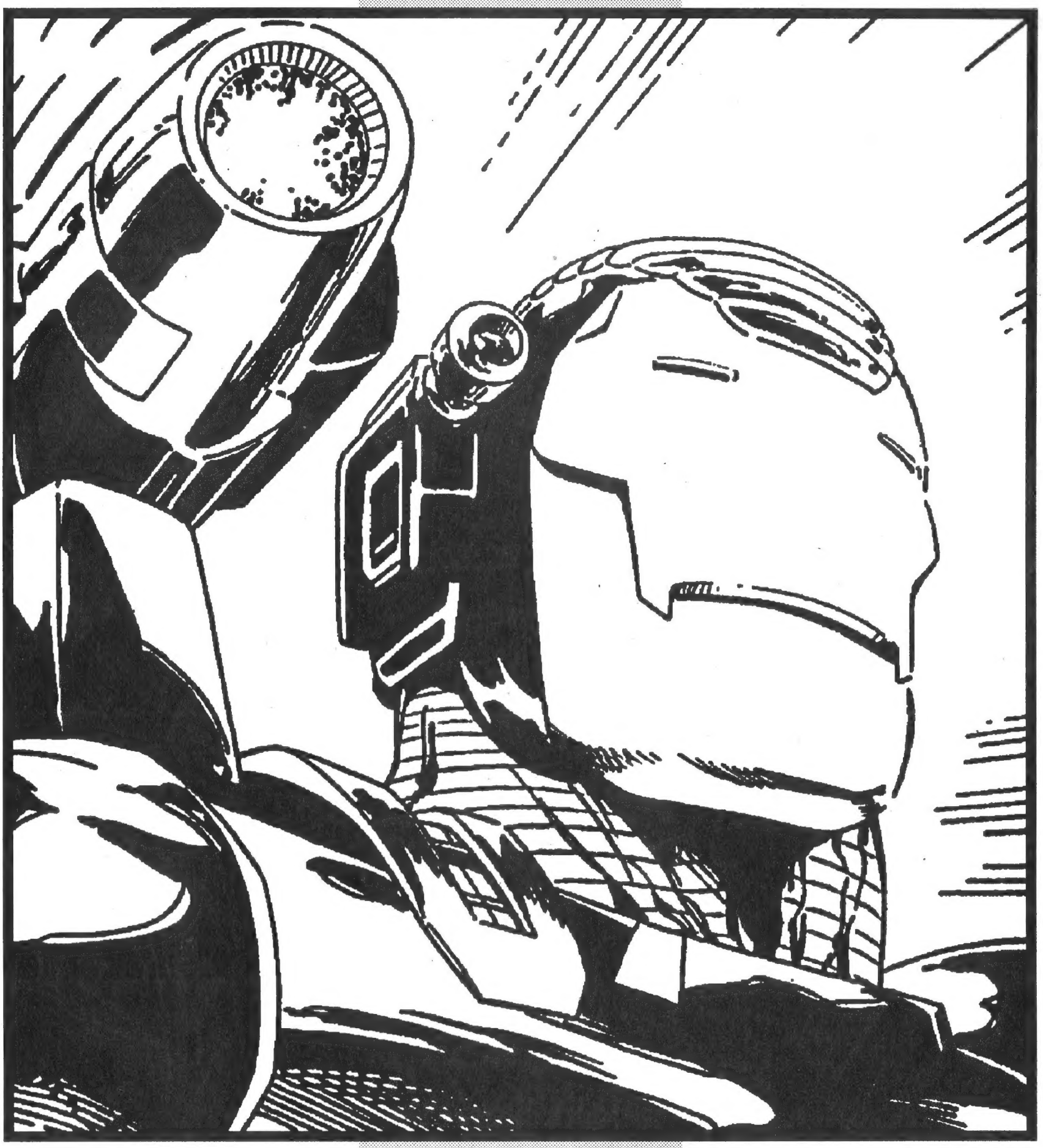
# INTRODUCTION:

With all the roster changes the Avengers have gone through in the last ten or so years you may be surprised to learn that one name has been associated with the book for nearly every issue published during that period. Tom Palmer has been quietly inking (and recently, coloring) away on Earth's mightiest heroes for nearly one third of their existence, so it's only fitting that we talk to him about the plans for the 30th Anniversary celebration.

At the time of this interview, David Ross was finishing his last issues of the Avengers West Coast. The Toronto native took time late one night to tell us what he could about the Avengers/X-Men 30th Anniversary, and a few other things.

**Ken Fries**

TOM:
--LET'S GET DOWN TO CASES!
SLAM



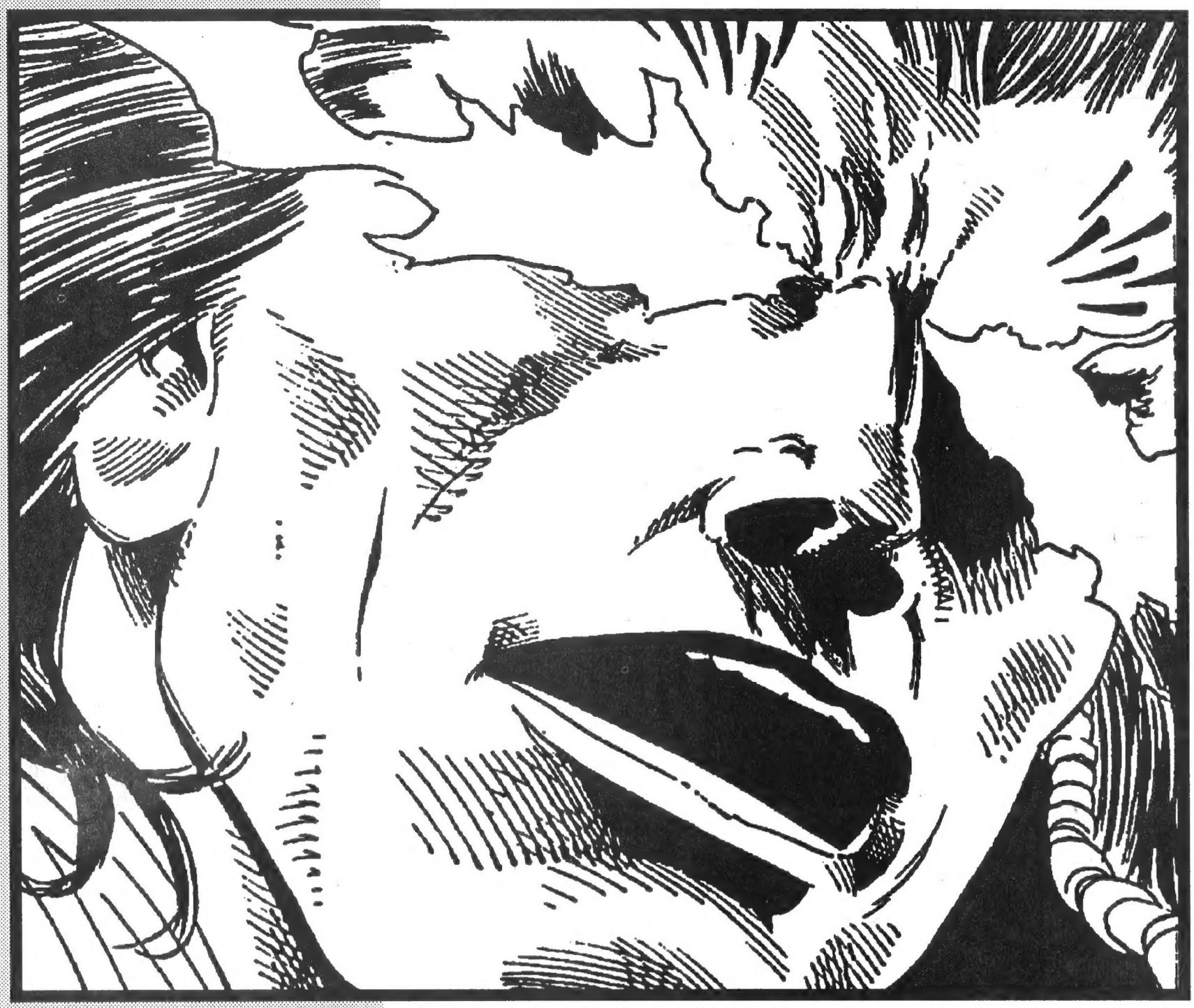
**Ken Fries:** What exactly is this project?

**Tom Palmer:** Well, it's the 30th anniversary year for both the Avengers and the X-Men, and I'm working on the anniversary issue with Bob Harras and SteveEpting.I don't know the number the X-Men anniversary issue will be, but the Avengers anniversary will be #366. After the Avengers anniversary there's a crossover with the X-Men which involves two issues of the *Avengers*, #368 and #369. I know the X-Men issue will be #26. And there'll be four special cover issues during the year to celebrate the Avengers 30th anniversary. There was bronze, silver, the one I'm working on, gold, and the last one is platinum. They're foil-embossed covers, and the X-Men crossover will tie in with the last one, the platinum. This will also include the finale to the crossover.

**"THERE WAS BRONZE, SILVER, THE ONE I'M WORKING ON, GOLD, AND THE LAST ONE IS PLATINUM."**

**KF:** You've been inking the Avengers for a long time, correct?

**TP:** Well since '83 or '84, around issue #250 or so. By now I've passed the hundred issue mark. At the time when it was exactly one hundred there were bi-weeklies that I did not work on, none of the regular team did, due to time, so it just sort of passed without notice. The editors did make note



**"I WAS ALWAYS PREPARED TO BE ASKED TO LEAVE, BUT I WASN'T."**

a little later in an issue, but I would rather look ahead.

**KF:** But you've been doing it every month for about ten years, consistently?

**TP:** Yeah, it's probably nine going on ten years.

**KF:** That's a nice long run. How have you managed to do that with Marvel and their constant rotation?

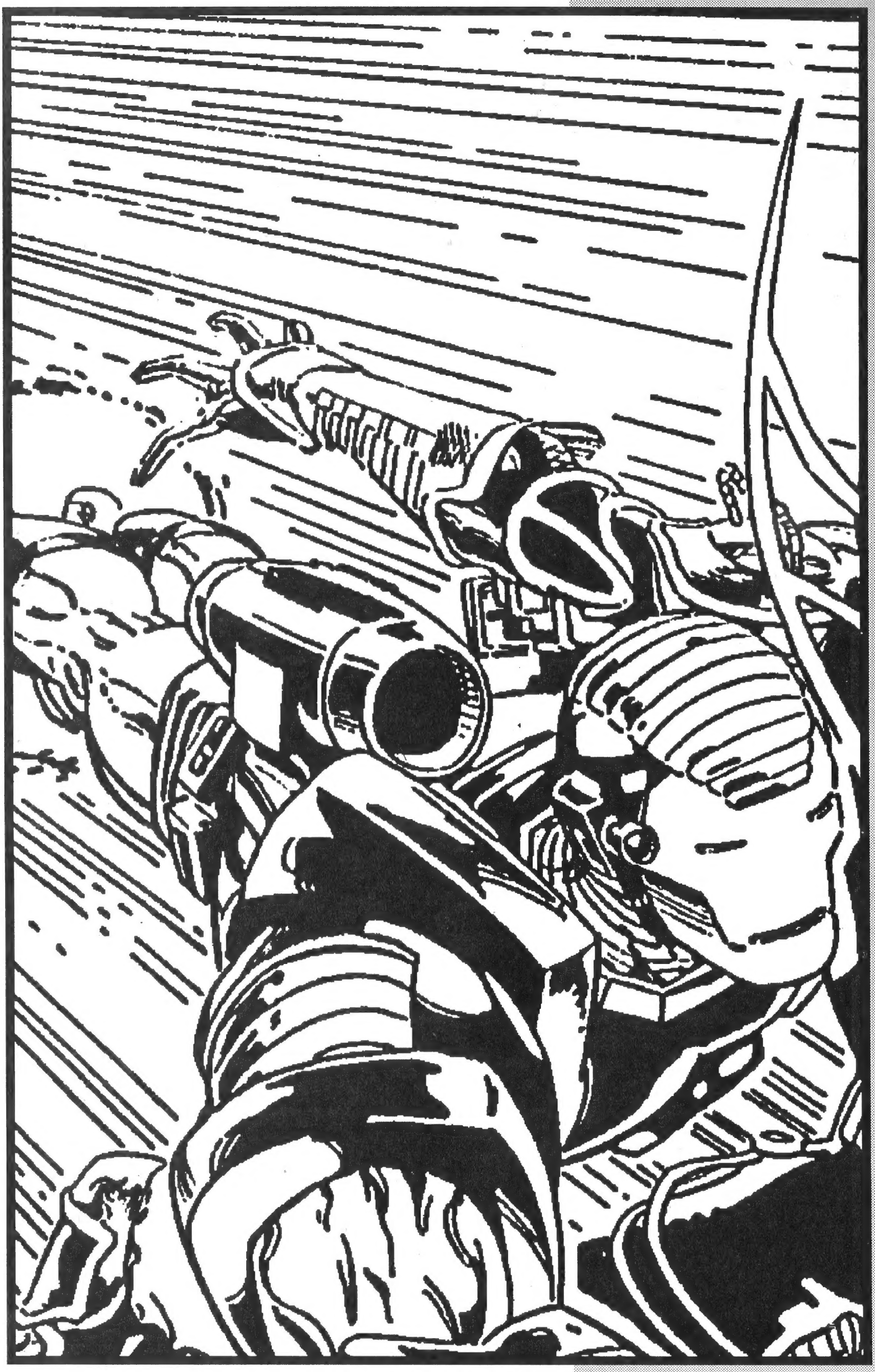
**TP:** Well, the editors have changed twice actually. I started with Mark Gruenwald, then Howard Mackie, and now with Ralph Macchio. I was always prepared to be asked to leave, but I wasn't. I was asked to stay, and I was flattered that they did. Ralph Macchio took over about two years ago when Howard Mackie left staff. I enjoy working on the Avengers. It's constantly changing. If it ever got static I'd be bored by it, and if I did get bored with any of this I would move on. It's been exciting and fun, since I've also been coloring the last year's worth of Avengers. The coloring is changing fast. We're adding airbrushing with the last two issues, and with the current issue I'm working on they're adding ten percent color. The issues recently have been just saturated with color. They've just been much darker and stronger than they were coded. There's changes in the printing process taking place and things should look better as the issues go on through the year. But it's becoming a lot of work. However, like I said, it's fun.

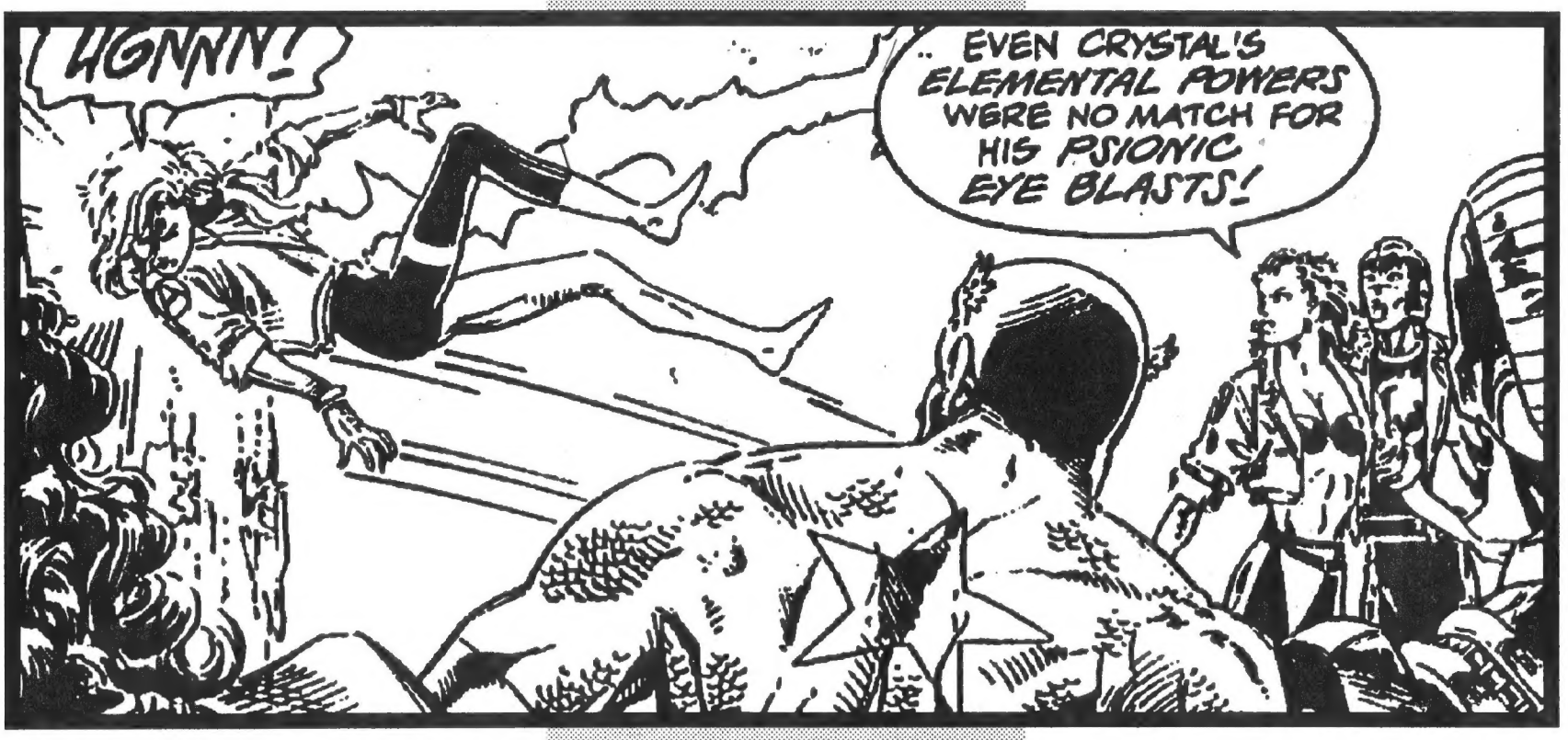
**KF:** Do you know anything about the promotion of this book? I'd heard there might be signed copies available through one of the home shopping networks.

**TP:** Well, Nick Barrucci of Dynamic Forces, who supplies the shopping networks with specialty items, is working with the Home Shopping Club and is planning to have signed copies made available to them.

**KF:** Bob Harras might know, what with him being interviewed on Entertainment Tonight at one point.

**TP:** I didn't know that, first I heard of






it. I think he's wearing two hats here, since he writes the *Avengers* and is the editor of the X-Men books and wants to keep them separate. I'm sure he is careful, and with that in mind he's treading a very thin line between the two.

**KF:** Where did you start? Before your Avengers inking run, what were you doing?

**TP:** I was doing *Star Wars* before that, and *Tomb of Dracula*. I haven't just been doing comics, I've been doing work on the outside, in advertising. Comics were always something I'd enjoyed, but I never did a lot of work in the comics each month. I did enough where I kept in the business because I enjoyed it a great deal, but I was always willing to do other things. Recently that's changed, since I'm probably devoting most of my time to comics. I'm in position on at least two books a month, and I've been doing that for a while. I've been doing *Nightstalkers* for a year with Ron Garney. Prior to that I worked with Ron on Moon Knight; all this time I was also doing the Avengers. So it's been a slow process of taking on more and more comic work. The other business is changing, shrinking advertising dollars I suppose, but comics are expanding and attracting more creative people.

**"I THINK THE INITIAL ATTRACTION TO COMICS WAS MONETARY, BUT IT'S SOMETHING THAT YOU REALLY GET CAUGHT UP IN, AND OBVIOUSLY I ENJOY IT."**

**KF:** Which did you get in first, advertising or comics?

**TP:** Both, really, when I got out of art school. I started doing advertising work, they're notorious for paying slow on work, and I was starving, so a friend in the field told me comics paid quickly. I always enjoyed comic books, it wasn't like I was a stranger to it, and it paid well. If you delivered, within a week you got a check, and you couldn't beat that. A lot of times you've got to chase for your money in

the advertising field. Some smaller clients don't feel pressured to pay you quickly. I think the initial attraction to comics was monetary, but it's something that you really get caught up in, and obviously I enjoy it. I would not be devoting the hours to it if I didn't enjoy it.

**KF:** Did you read them as a kid?

**TP:** Oh sure, yeah. I have an older brother that was buying comics, so they were there from when I can remember. It's something I was raised on, and yet I can walk and chew gum at the same time! I know there's a feeling by some parents that comics are terrible for kids, or at least there was that feeling. But I think I learned to read through comics, and there's a place for them, really.

**KF:** As long as kids are reading, it's something positive.

**TP:** Absolutely, yes. I see with my own son how he obviously was involved with comics, reading them at an early age, and how the transition was made naturally into other areas of reading. The comics would prompt his investigation into other areas to read about, and he has become rather well read in the process.

**KF:** Do you do conventions?

**TP:** Not recently. I run hot and cold. I'll go to a few, then I'll stop. This may sound terrible, and I'm not trying to sound condemning of them, but I've noticed them getting really hectic, and there's less of a one-on-one with the fans. If you go to conventions out of town, very small conventions, you get that same feeling you had in the mid- to late-'80s.

**KF:** Well, with the X-Men/Avengers crossover due soon, do you think you'll be showing up at a few?

**TP:** I don't think there are any conventions later in the year. They're in the beginning of the year and the summer. I'm not going out to San Diego because I'm just swamped, I just can't take the time.

**KF:** When is this crossover slated to appear?

**TP:** I believe October/November. That's the announced release date. It would have to be before the end of the year.

**KF:** That is a dry period for shows.

**TP:** After San Diego, the kids go back to school, and I think that's notoriously the worst month. Kids go back to school, and their minds are on other things.

**KF:** The next big convention would be the one in New York in February.

**TP:** I know Fred Greenberg, and I promised him that when I start going to conventions again I'd go to his first. I really enjoy the fans, I enjoy the readers. It's great getting feedback. You're working in a very solitary environment, and you forget that lots of pairs of eyes are looking at and reading this stuff. Sometimes you assume that whatever you're doing is in the right direction, and you might be surprised to find it is not. It's great to know if you're moving in the right direction.

**KF:** Just to jump back to the advertising for a minute, is there anything well known you have done?

**TP:** Well, in advertising I did work for American Cyanamid, Sharp Electronics, and I've done work for Panasonic, but I think we're in an era where unless you get a cover of a high profile magazine or a special campaign, and you're a big name, you don't get a chance to have your name appear. A lot of times I'll sign work and it will be cropped out. They're kind of turned off to artists signing their work, they don't want you to promote yourself, they want to promote their product. Lately I've drifted away from it. It seems to be more

constrictive creatively. You don't have that freedom which comics seem to have. There's so much going on in comics. I've done two paintings recently for the Marvel Masterpieces II trading card series, one of Blade and one of the Black Knight. I believe they solicited 25 artists to do 104 cards, I did two, some did three, I don't know the roster of people, but that was a fun project. Obviously I've been painting through the years with the advertising work, and...

**KF:** I seem to remember some covers for comics also.

**TP:** Yes, covers and some posters. I hope to do more covers and I am working on three paintings for a new X-Men trading card series similar to the last project, with many artists involved. Believe me, there's been so much work, with over-sized issues, we're running rather late with our deadlines, it's going to be tough to do much else.

**"YES, COVERS AND SOME POSTERS. I HOPE TO DO MORE COVERS AND I AM WORKING ON THREE PAINTINGS FOR A NEW X-MEN TRADING CARD SERIES."**

**KF:** Are there going to be any bi-weeklies?

**TP:** No, they've stopped that. I don't know how they would have done it with all that's going on. I think they realized that it disrupted everyone's schedule, so they're not doing it anymore. They're coming out with quarterlies with a different creative team on each.

**KF:** The Marvel Unlimited books?

**TP:** Yeah, and that's the way they're solving that. That way they can as-

sign it to whoever, and get away from the regular team who really don't need the added pressure.

**KF:** So there's going to be an Avengers Unlimited?

**TP:** I would assume that, but I don't really know. It isn't that they're going to pick and choose. I think they want to produce so many books, so they would probably do it. Since they're using a different creative team, I wouldn't even be aware of it.

**KF:** Have you ever worked with Andy Kubert before?

**TP:** Yeah, as a matter of fact it was when he first started doing work at Marvel. It might not have been his actual first job, but he did a fill-in Avengers that I inked. I'm trying to think what issue it was, Ralph Macchio was just taking over as editor, so it was probably around two years ago. I've also done some of his X-Men pages that they farmed out. They had to get a lot of pages done quickly and they gave a number of pages to different people to finish and I was one of them. You know normally they wouldn't make a big deal out of these Avengers issues, but because it ties in with the X-Men, they're giving it a big promotion. Andy is working on the new X-Men title which will be part of the crossover, but the X-Men book that's really in the limelight for the anniversary is the *Uncanny X-Men*. As far as I know, the X-Men are going after the West Coast Avengers, and that title is in for some changes also. I know of a few things, but I can't discuss it since it's not my book.

**"THEY'RE COMING OUT WITH A DIFFERENT CREATIVE TEAM ON EACH."**

**KF:** Well, do you know of anything happening in your book?

**TP:** I don't want to say too much, but I know when we come out of this crossover the line-up of members will be different. It will not be the Avengers as you now know it. Meaning big changes and I've got to be careful

about saying too much. The Avengers have been one of those roster books, teams made up of characters with existing books, like Thor, Captain America, Iron Man. I think it's going to be a lot different than that. It's going to have a different approach, a different storyline. There's a lot of things converging on this crossover, and once we get past it, the path is clear and you can do really whatever you want. So I don't think anything can be absolute about what is going to occur. I know who the new line-up is going to be, but I'm not at freedom to say, at least I don't think I am, so I'm not going to elaborate on that. But it's going to be exciting.

**KF:** Will it definitely be a change from the current line-up?

**TP:** [laughs] I don't even know if I should say that. If it is, that means that the people that are there now will not be there, and that's not true. Let's say it will be different, but it doesn't mean the current line-up will not exist.

**KF:** Dangling plot lines will be tied-up, though?

**TP:** Yes, that's another thing, yes. Going back at least a year and a half, which I think is terrific. Through a lot of the issues you'll find sub-plots popping up, and they're all going to make sense. You'll probably slap the side of your head and say, "Yeah, Yeah!" There are many sub-plots that have appeared, and they're all connected, it's going to come to a point, and some surprising things are going to occur. See, this is where I am vague. I know what's going to happen, but I don't know when and where it's going to happen, even the crossovers, which involve other books and editors. See, most of my information comes from the Avengers office, mostly through assistant editor Pat

**"THROUGH A LOT OF THE ISSUES YOU'LL FIND SUBPLOTS POPPING UP, AND THEY'RE ALL GOING TO MAKE SENSE. YOU'LL PROBABLY SLAP THE SIDE OF YOUR HEAD AND SAY, "YEAH, YEAH!"**

**"THEY DON'T FILL ME IN ON EVERY NOOK AND CRANNY WHEN DEADLINES APPROACH."**

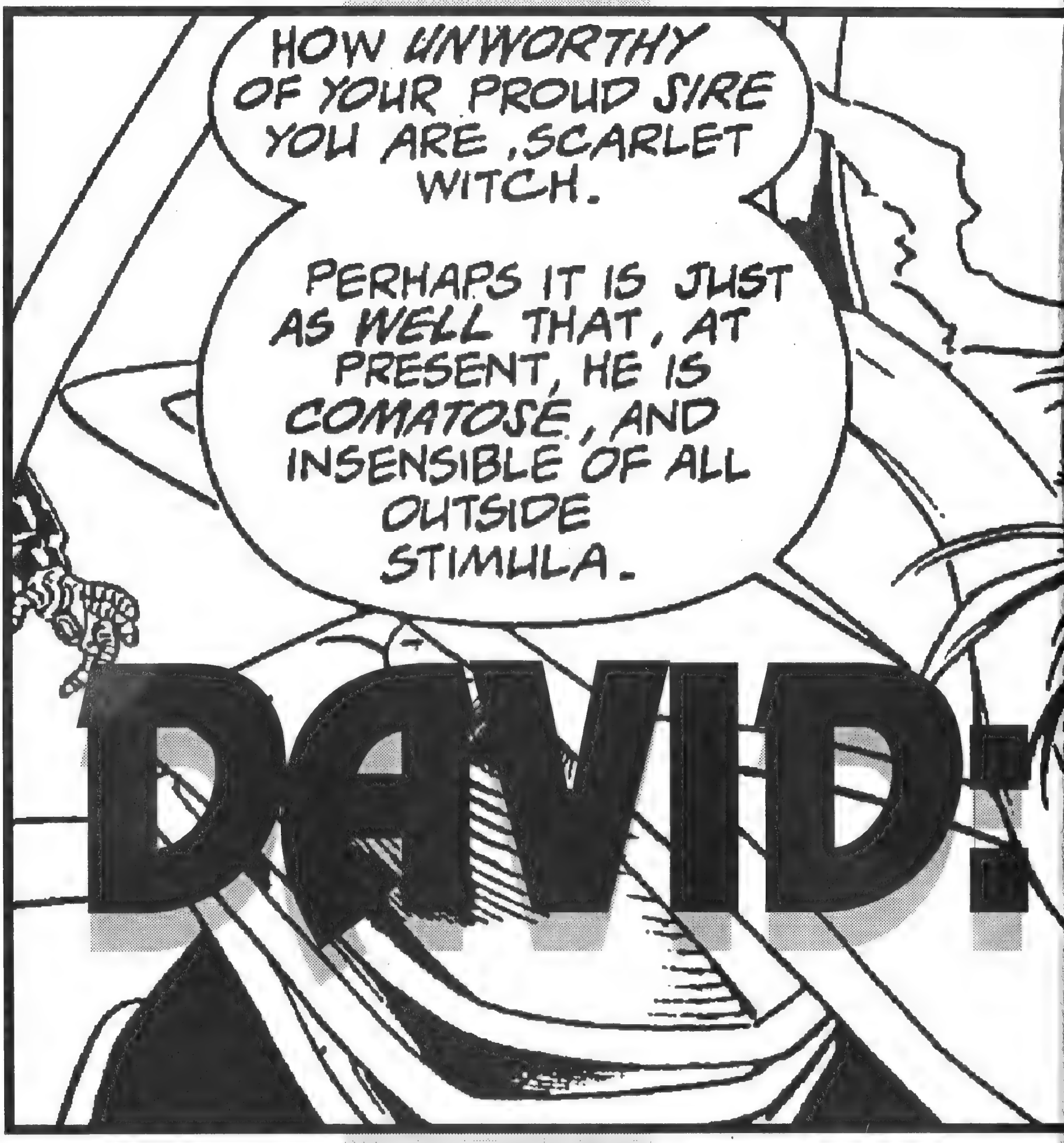
Garrahy, and it's based on "need-to-know." They usually want to know where the pages are. [laughs]

**KF:** [sarcastically] "Is the work done yet?"

**TP:** Yeah, "Where's the pages?" They don't fill me in on every nook and cranny when deadlines approach.

**KF:** Okay, thanks, I've enjoyed this.

**TP:** It's been my pleasure. Great talking to you.


HOW UNWORTHY OF YOUR PROUD SIRE YOU ARE, SCARLET WITCH.
PERHAPS IT IS JUST AS WELL THAT, AT PRESENT, HE IS COMATOSE, AND INSENSIBLE OF ALL OUTSIDE STIMULA.
DAVID

**Ken Fries:** Well, let's start with the fact that you're working on the X-Men/Avengers 30th Anniversary crossover. What can you tell me about the story?

**David Ross:** That's tough. You know, they haven't even got a plot together. They're all going to be real late shipping. Our book [*Avengers West Coast*], which is going to be written by Roy Thomas, #101, is the third part of the storyline, and as such it depends upon the previous two parts before it can get going. Roy's been waiting to get confirmation on plot points in terms of which groups are going to be with which groups. I think basically what it's about is...well, this has gone through x number of mutations and complications, but I do have an outline of what it's supposed to be all about. The first part is going to be in *Avengers* #368, and it's got to do with the return of Magneto, and the virus that's being played up through the X-titles. It also has to deal with Luna. I suppose she has to be a granddaughter of Magneto. She's the daughter of Crystal and Pietro (Quicksilver, Magneto's

**"WELL, THIS HAS GONE THROUGH X NUMBER OF MUTATIONS AND COMPLICATIONS, BUT I DO HAVE AN OUTLINE OF WHAT IT'S SUPPOSED TO BE ALL ABOUT."**

son). I think she actually gets kidnapped, so that's a part of it, a motivator to get the Avengers involved in it. They're throwing in everything but the kitchen sink. Shield gets involved in the storyline, Genosha is front and center. Besides Magneto being involved in the storyline, the big heavy of the whole story is going to be Fabian Cortez. He's the one that has organized the kidnapping of Luna, and part of that is to deliberately get the Avengers involved in what's going on.

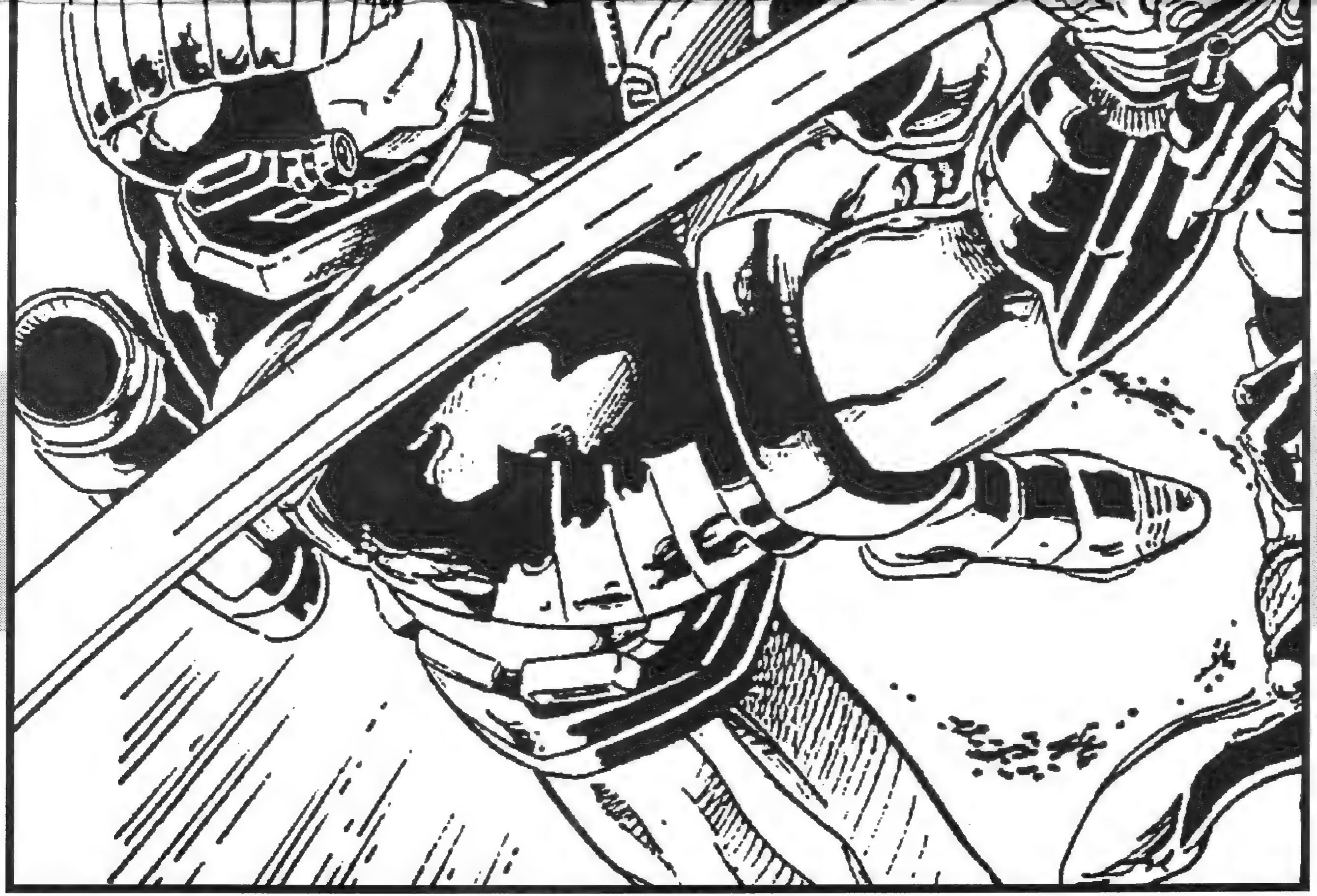
**KF:** Now how long have you been doing Avengers West Coast?

**DR:** I've been working on it for about two and a half years.

**KF:** I seem to remember you doing Alpha Flight a few years ago.

**DR:** Yeah, that was my first group book. I worked on that for about a year. I actually took a trip to the Far East, and travelled around a bit, for a few months. Then when I came back I did some Punisher work, I did *Punisher* #6 and #7. I ended up doing a lot of work for Terry Kavanagh's office eventually. Oh yes, I worked on Powerline, which was from the

**"THEY'RE THROWING IN EVERYTHING BUT THE KITCHEN SINK. SHIELD GETS INVOLVED IN THE STORYLINE, GENOSHA IS FRONT AND CENTER."**



--LET'S RUMBLE!
KTHOOM

YOU'D ACTUALLY TRY TO PUNISH ME-- FOR PURGING THE EARTH OF A FEW PALTRY HUMAN BEINGS?!
BUT OF COURSE! YOU ARE HUMAN YOURSELF!
AND ONE DOES NOT SEND A SHEEP TO SLAUGHTER A LAMB.

"Shadowline" series. The first four issues of it.

**KF:** Didn't last too much beyond that, did it?

**DR:** No, it didn't. That was unfortunate, in many ways, but it was a learning experience for me. I think my artwork was progressing during that period. Then I ended up working on some *Spider-Man* work. I did a *Spectacular Spider-Man* annual. I did a couple of fill-in series, inventory pieces that were used about a year later on *Spider-Man*, and I also did a number of *Excalibur* issues. I did *Marvel Comics Presents* Hulk and Wolverine storylines, from #54 onwards for eight issues.

**KF:** Now with all this work, you're under contract for Marvel, or...?

**DR:** Nope, just a freelancer.

**KF:** It just happens to all be for Marvel, though?

**DR:** Yeah. That's just what kept coming in, so... It's amazing these days, it seems that even if you don't have a

**"...BUT IT WAS A LEARNING EXPERIENCE FOR ME. I THINK MY ARTWORK WAS PROGRESSING DURING THAT PERIOD."**

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**"IT'S AMAZING THESE DAYS, IT SEEMS THAT EVEN IF YOU DON'T HAVE A REGULAR BOOK, YOU CAN KEEP QUITE BUSY JUST DOING ANNUALS, STORIES FILL-INS, INVENTORY PIECES."**

regular book, you can keep quite busy just doing annuals, stories, fill-ins, inventory pieces. There seems to be enough of that kind of material around to keep a freelancer busy.

**KF:** So you're not even contracted on Avengers West Coast?

**DR:** Nope.

**KF:** And you've been on it for two and a half years, that's pretty good.

**DR:** Of course, that's coming to an end because the book is coming to an end.

**KF:** Really?

**DR:** That you didn't know, right?

**KF:** No.

**DR:** Okay, well, there's some news for you. As of issue #102, that is the end of *Avengers West Coast.*

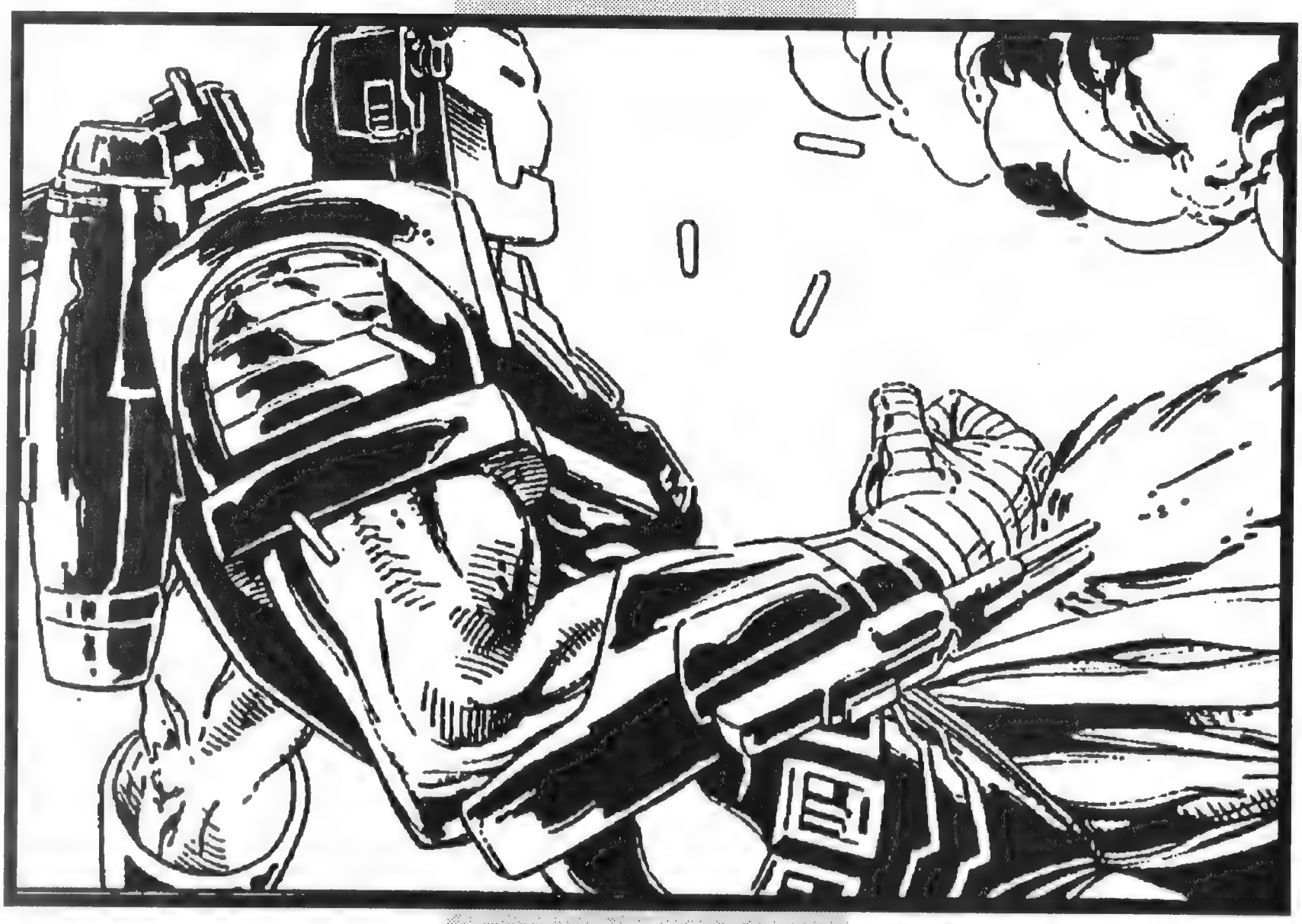
**KF:** That's an interesting place to end it, actually.

**DR:** Right after that big crossover.

**KF:** Well, even number-wise, it's a weird place.

**DR:** #102, yeah. Well, apparently what they've got in mind is that basically the same cast of characters is going to be carrying on in another book, but without the Avengers name in the title. The idea being, what they want to do is...they felt that the *West Coast Avengers* has always suffered by being perceived by the public as a kind of second-stringer Avengers group. And so they would always come in second to the *Avengers* title. Editorially speaking it was a pain too, because you always had to get approval for this or that from the editor of the Avengers book before you could make a move in *Avengers West Coast*. So to get around that, they...

**KF:** Sort of what like *New Mutants* was to *X-Men*?



**DR:** I suppose, and maybe even more recently where they shuffled some old material. The *New Mutants* basically became *X-Force*?

**KF:** Right.

**DR:** A little like that. In fact, the name of the new book is going to be *Force Works*.

**KF:** Okay. Do you know if you'll be involved with that?

**DR:** No. What they decided to do was, to create the impression in people's minds of this being a new book, to warrant a #1 and the change of the name and so forth, they have a whole new creative team coming in. The only thing the same about it is the editor.

**KF:** So, do you know what your next main source of work is going to be?

**DR:** No, it's up in the air at the moment. I'm looking into some possibilities, both Marvel and non-Marvel. It's a pretty open market at the moment. Good options out there. I may very well be doing a Punisher job for Don Daley's office, that looks pretty good right now. I have to iron out some details.

**KF:** On one of the regular titles, or a special?

**DR:** It would be a story for an annual for next summer, the main story, the lead story. I think it's for *War Zone*, but don't hold me on that. It's hard to keep track.

**KF:** There's far too many of them. Do you do anything outside of comics?

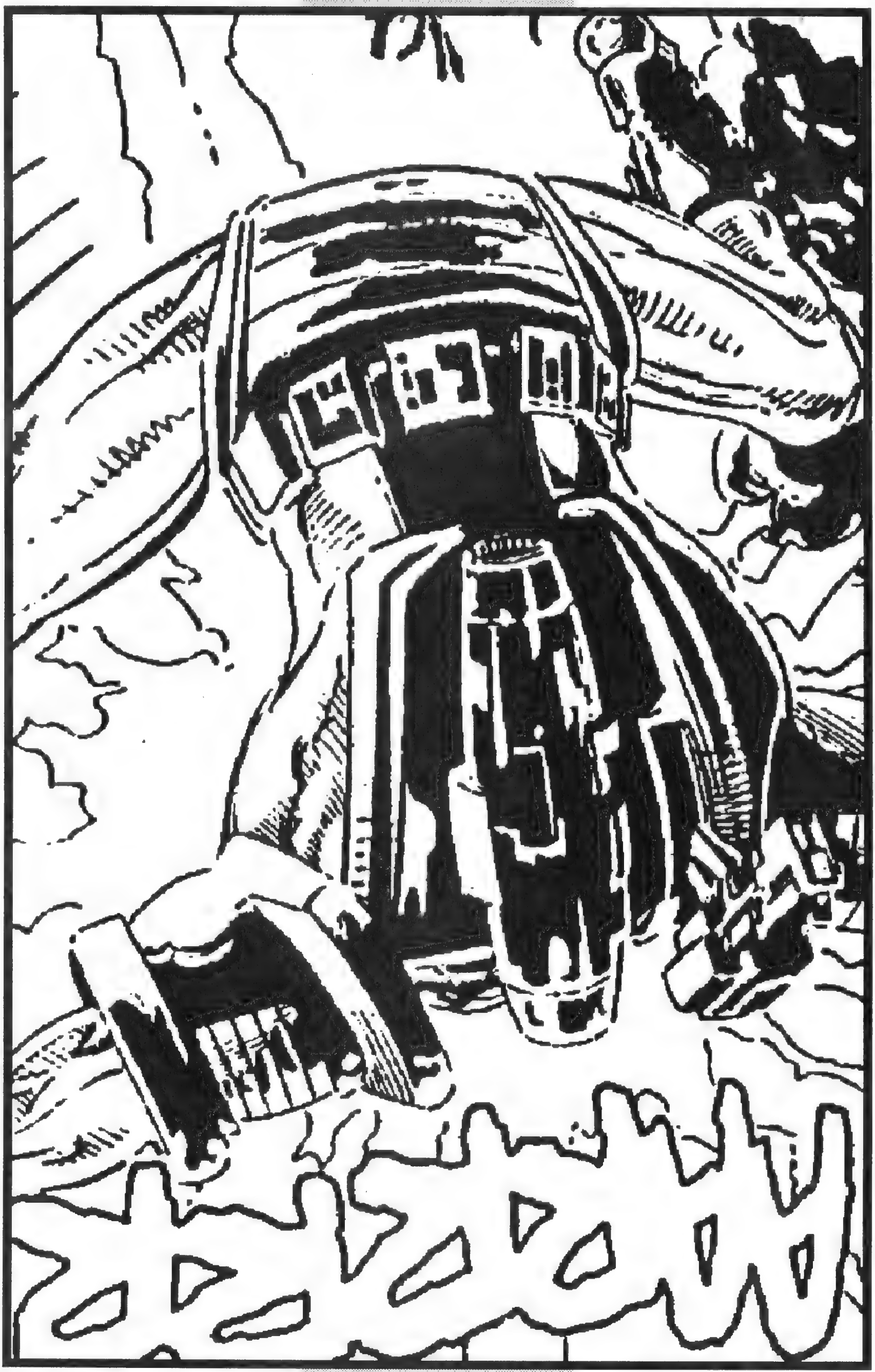
**DR:** I ride my bicycle if I get a chance. No, in terms of artwork, I haven't. I used to do a little now and then. I used to do storyboarding. In fact, I did storyboarding years ago for Paul Lynch. I don't know if you know Paul Lynch but he's a director now, best known for doing a number of episodes of Star Trek: The Next Generation, and Star Trek: Deep Space Nine. He did a film called Humongous. That was one of his earliest films. Oh, wait, not Humongous, although I did a bit of work on Humongous, the one I was actually thinking of was Prom Night. I storyboarded that film. On and off I do a little bit of storyboarding work. I actually ran into Paul a couple of weeks ago, and I may be doing some storyboarding work for a RoboCop TV series he's working on.

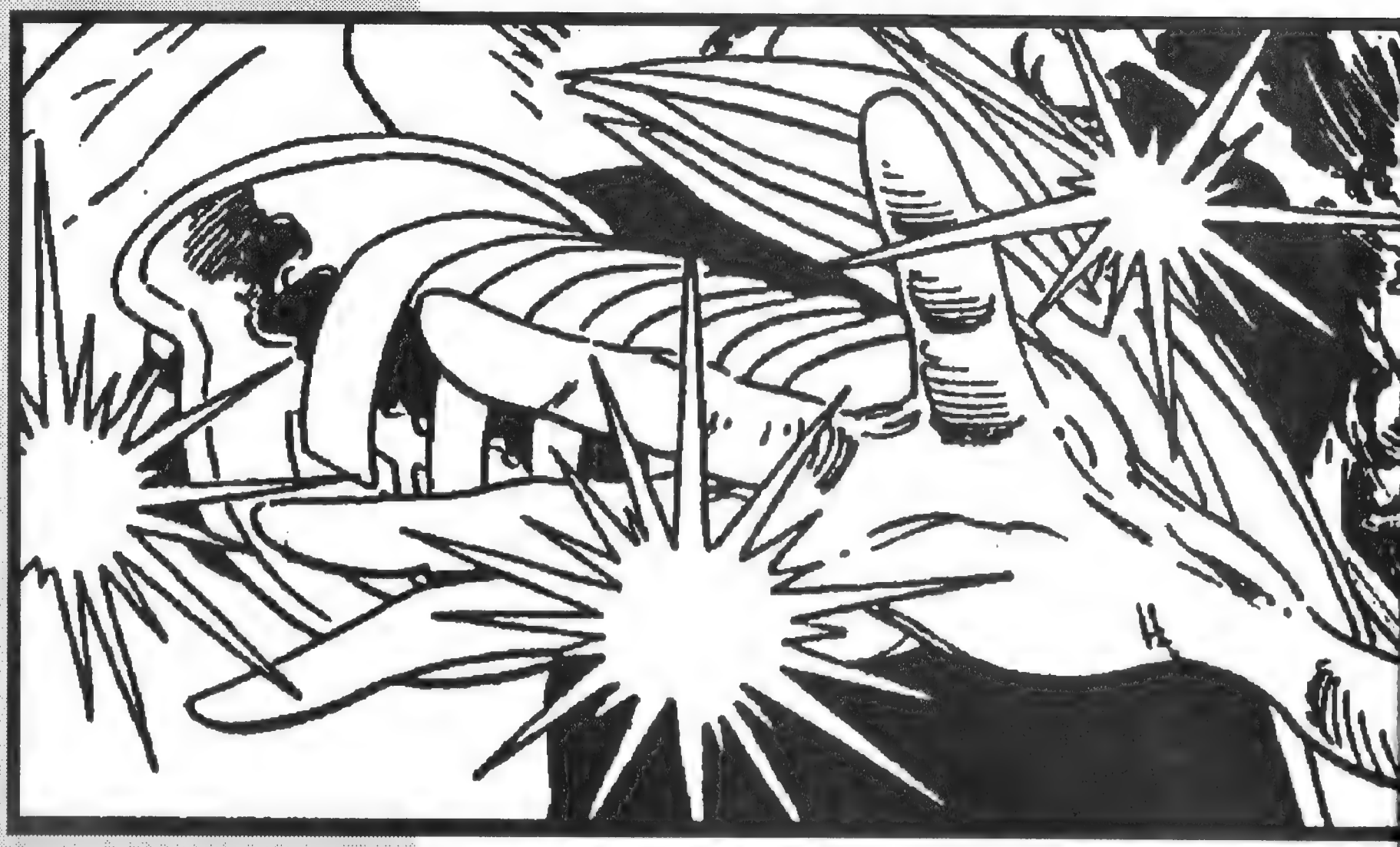
**KF:** Live-action?

**DR:** I think so. He's a live-action director, he doesn't really do animation.

**KF:** I find it interesting that there would be a live-action RoboCop se-

**KF: "DO YOU DO ANYTHING OUTSIDE OF COMICS?"**
**DR: "I RIDE MY BICYCLE IF I GET A CHANCE. NO, IN TERMS OF ARTWORK, I HAVEN'T."**





**"I MIGHT BE DOING SOME STORYBOARDING WORK FOR A ROBOCOP TV SERIES HE'S WORKING ON."**

ries, but okay.

**DR:** That's what they're talking about. I haven't heard back from him on that, but I just ran into him here in Toronto. He's from Toronto, but he spends most of his time down in L.A., and he happened to be on a shoot. He was shooting something with Robert Urich in it. He wandered into the cafe that I was sitting in, and I recognized him, and after a moment he recognized me, and he asked, did I want some work. I am working on *West Coast Avengers*, but it's coming to an end. However, I think I'll probably be sticking with comics.

**KF:** Since you mentioned Toronto, I was going to ask about that. Was that any connection to why you were on *Alpha Flight* in the first place?

**DR:** [laughs] Not really. They knew that they were losing their artist on the book, and Bill Mantlo had apparently seen some of my work. I actually got a call from him. We ran it past Carl Potts. At that time I was actually doing some work for DC. I'd done *the Last Days Of The Justice Society Of America*. It was a special, written by Roy Thomas, 60-some pages I believe. It was supposed to be a real glossy thing and they decided to downgrade it, which Roy and I were not too happy about. It became just a regular newsprint book, but a big

**"I DO SOMETIMES GO OUT OF TOWN. I WENT TO CHICAGO FOR A CONVENTION, NOT THE BIG CHICAGO-CON, A SMALLER ONE."**

one. They all end up in some sort of a nether world limbo at the end of the story. Before that I did a Star Trek annual, and a *Batman and The Outsiders* annual.

**KF:** The *Batman and The Outsiders* annual, was that with Mike Barr?

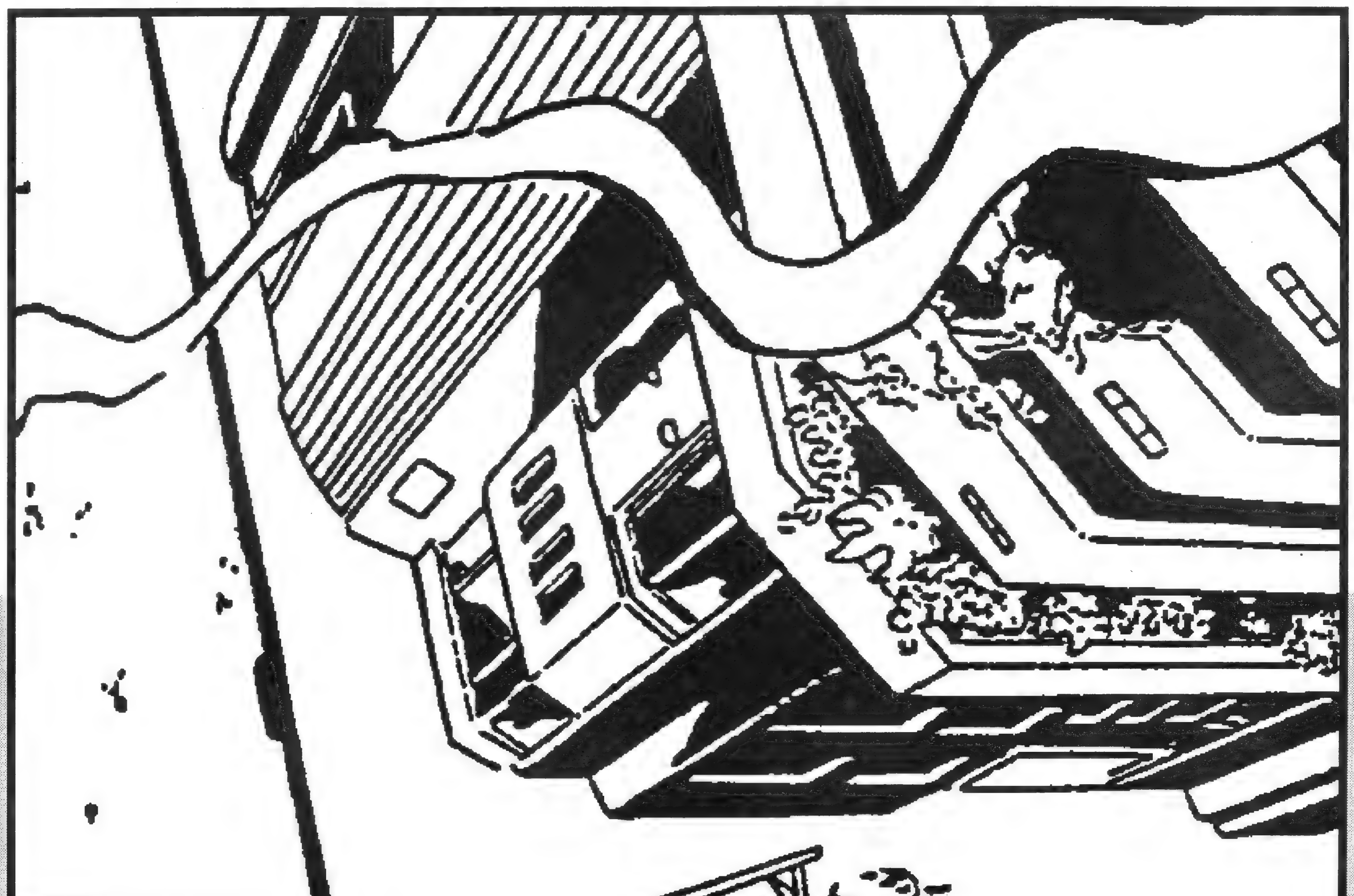
**DR:** Yeah, sure was. The marriage of Metamorpho and Sapphire Star.

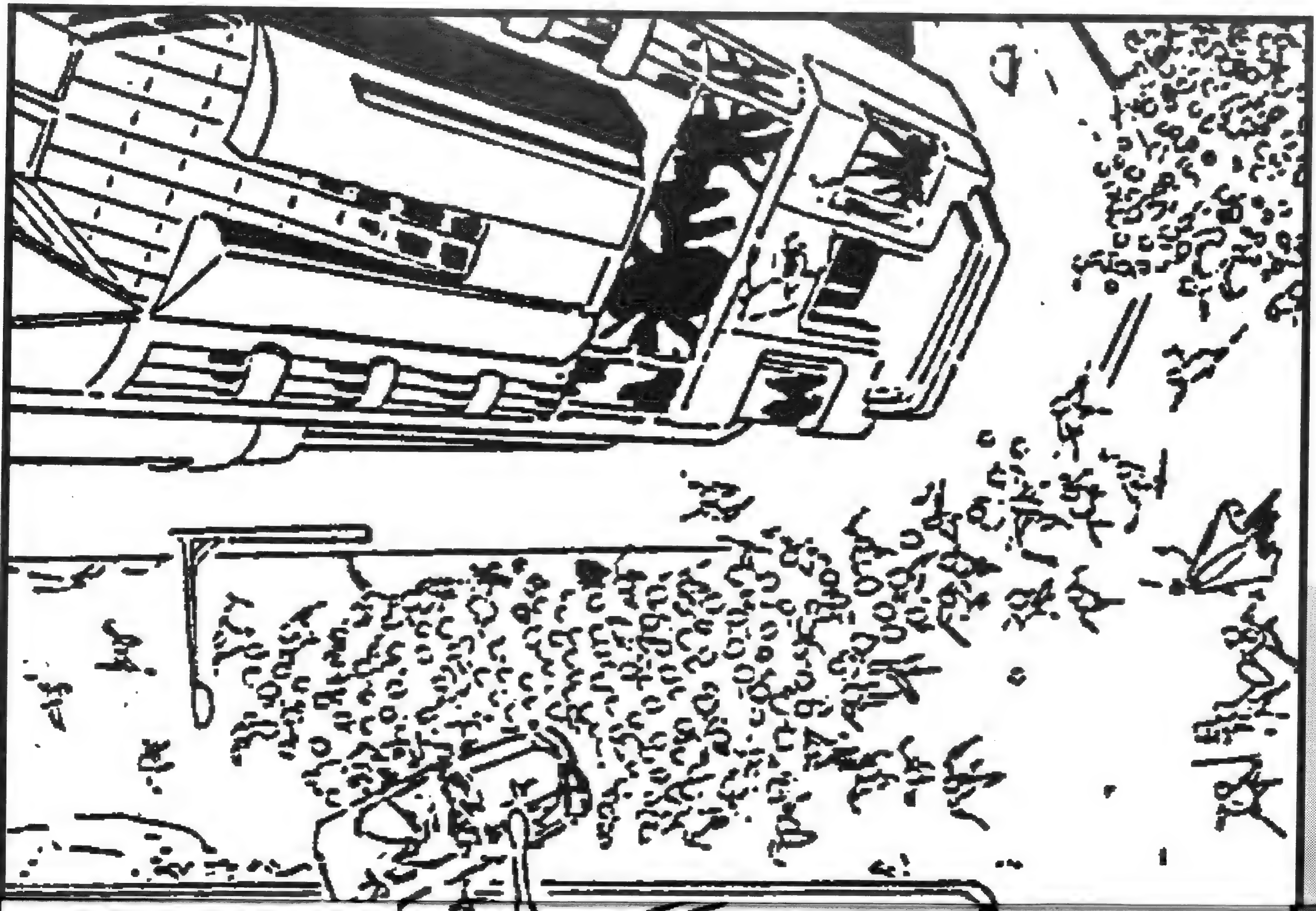
**KF:** What about conventions, do you ever do any of those?

**DR:** Every now and then. We used to have some in Toronto, we haven't had much lately, nothing major. I do sometimes go out of town. I went to Chicago for a convention, not the big Chicago-Con, a smaller one. It was very successful, we had a good turnout.

**KF:** Do you get positive reactions from the fans?

**DR:** Seem to. Seem to get a generally positive reaction from working on *West Coast*. Early on, when I would go to a convention, before *West Coast*, I would get a lot of the Excalibur work that I did, and the Punisher work in particular. I did a few issues of Puni sher (*"War Journal"*) just after Jim Lee left, with Spider-Man guest-starring, and those two issues would find their way around. Lately, there's been only a little of that stuff, but a lot of West Coast Avengers material. Two and a half years has got





**"THE TWO COMPANIES I'VE BEEN GIVING MOST SERIOUS ATTENTION TO ARE VALIANT AND MALIBU."**

people to start thinking of me in terms of that book. But, you know, all things must come to an end, and it is certainly coming to an end quickly on that book. A month and a half worth of work left on it and it's done.

**KF:** And the X-Men will be in that part of the story?

**DR:** Oh, I'm sure they'll be in that.

**KF:** And that's the first time you've ever handled them?

**DR:** Yup. The only other time I've even given it any thought was a video cassette cover for one of the animated X-Men Adventures. They were taking the covers right off the X-Men Adventures comic book, but they got to one where they felt that it would be a little too violent. They needed to still have action on the cover, but it somehow had to be cooled down, so I did a cover on that. I suppose that's my first professional time drawing X-characters. There's no point in me talking specifics on what I'm talking to other publishers about, because nothing's been firmed up yet. I have to make a decision basically. I have two or three offers on the table, which is nice to have, and I've just got to decide which to go forward with.

**KF:** Would Defiant happen to be among those?

**DR:** Well, as a matter of fact, no, but when I was in New York running around, I actually ran into Jim Shooter standing on the street corner. I said hi to him and he gave me his business card, [laughs] so I can always get in touch with him, but no, I haven't really given Defiant serious thought. The two companies I've been giving most serious attention to are Valiant and Malibu.

**KF:** What about Image?

**DR:** They seem to be sticking with their core group, and not taking on anyone else, so that's not really a viable option.

**KF**: Which comics do you like?

**DR:** In terms of reading, I think one of my favorite ones has been the Savage Dragon book. Erik does a nice job on that.

**KF:** I've scanned them, and he's having fun with them, it looks like.

**DR:** Exactly, that's what it is. There's a sense of that old fashioned fun to it. The same sort of sense you get out of the old Fantastic Four stuff. I like to see that fun back in there. There's a certain grittiness they're all going for, they try to get that in as well, but there's sort of a nod to the lighter stuff as well.

**KF:** Do you think there was any sort of atmosphere like that on the Avengers or anything else you've worked on?

**DR:** Not really. A little of the Excalibur work. I had writers such as Dana Mooreshead and Scott Lobdell when I was working on the Excalibur material, and they both like to get some of the lighter touches in. I think that would be the one big example of lighter writing. The rest of it was pretty straightforward comic stuff that was fairly heavy.

**KF:** I'm still surprised about *Avengers West Coast*. I'm surprised they would actually let a book go past issue #100 and cancel it.

**DR:** Well, the sales figures have been just fine. They haven't been wonderful, but they haven't been terrible. The book's been selling consistently, and with all the competition out there on the racks, that's pretty good. But they felt that if they could fiddle with it and somehow increase the sales for awhile, that it was worth doing. So you're going to have *Force Works* pretty soon. I told them it reminded me of a restaurant chain up here in Toronto called Fullworks. I don't think they appreciated the humor in that.

**KF:** [laughs] So the book won't sell in Toronto.

**DR:** Unless Fullworks wants to take up distributing it.

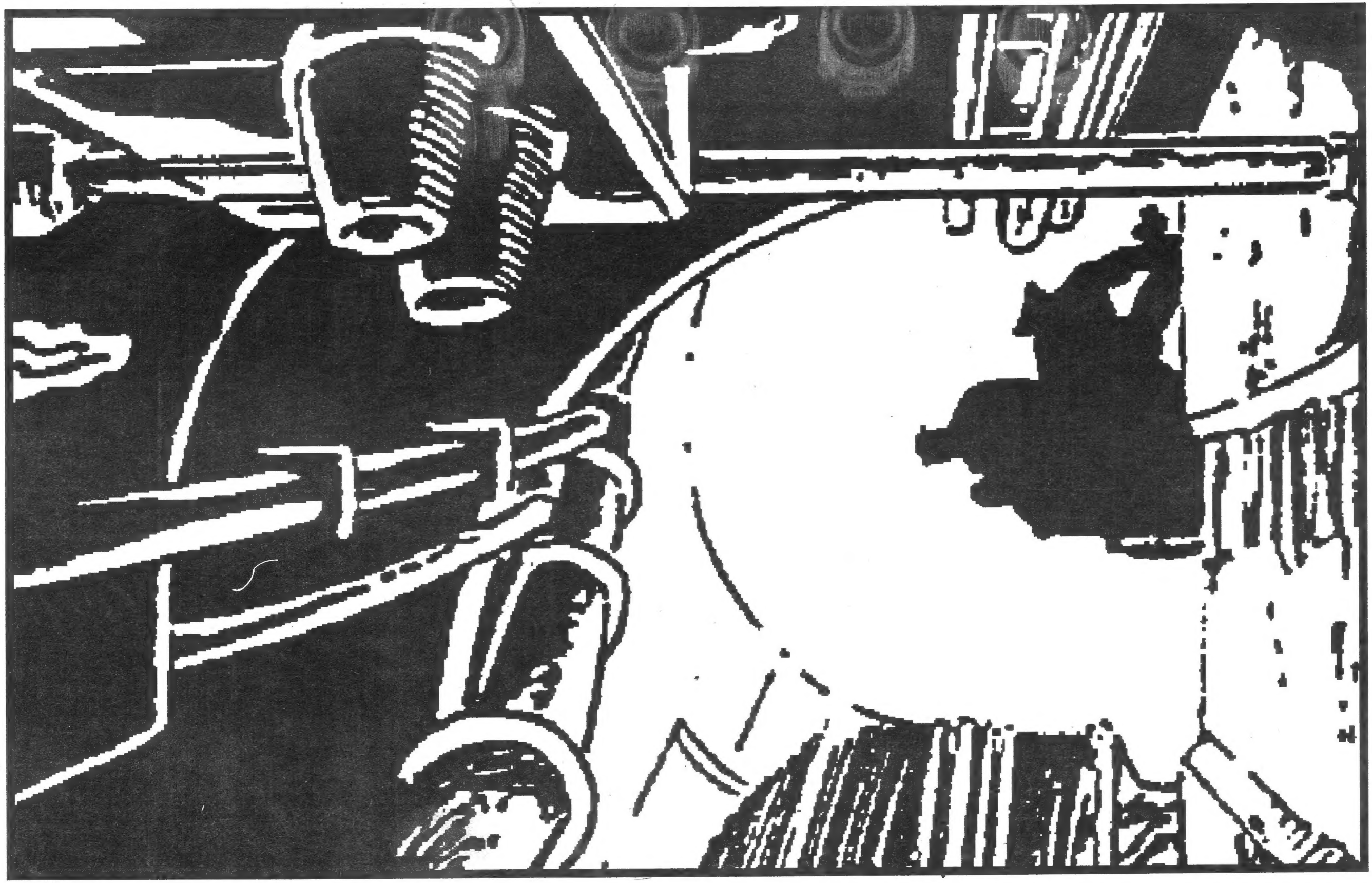
**KF:** It would be an interesting twist on the market. I appreciate your taking the time for this.

**DR:** My pleasure.

**KF:** Good luck finding some more work

**DR:** Thank you very much.

OF YOUR PROUD SIRE YOU ARE, SCARLET WITCH.
PERHAPS IT IS JUST AS WELL THAT, AT PRESENT, HE IS COMATOSÉ, AND INSENSIBLE OF ALL OUTSIDE STIMULA.



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